

Irrigation Canals in the Uinta Basin,
Rocky Point Canal
Duchesne Vicinity
Duchesne County
Utah

HAER No. UT-30-K

HAER
UTAH
7-DUCH.V,
1K-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Point of Diversion from Duchesne River in S12, T3S, R5W
Duchesne, Duchesne County, Utah

Quad: Duchesne, Duchesne NE

Date of Construction: 1905-1911

Present Owner: Rocky Point Ditch Company
Duchesne, Utah

Original Use: Irrigation Canal

Present Use: Irrigation Canal

Significance: The Rocky Point Canal is significant for its importance in supplying irrigation water to farms near the City of Duchesne. With the failure of the Blue Bench Irrigation District #1 (Knight Ditch), the Rocky Point Canal was the only major canal serving lands around Duchesne. Until recently, with the Bureau of Reclamation establishing its headquarters for the Central Utah Project in Duchesne, agriculture was the major influence on the area's economy. The design of the canal is another aspect affecting the significance of this system. The canal's alignment was precisely located to bring the water from the Duchesne River across the Blue Bench and back down to the river valley. The canal is etched into both the west and east cliffs of Blue Bench. Because the headgate is due to be replaced, it is not considered as a contributing factor in the canal's significance.

Inventoried by: James Jurale, David Stalheim, Craig Fuller
National Park Service
July 1983

DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY

The Rocky Point Canal diverts water from the east bank of the Duchesne River in S12, T3S, R5W. The Rocky Point headgate is constructed out of wood with two steel turnwheels vertically lifting two wooden gates. The wooden gates are 5-6 feet in height and 3-4 feet wide, made of flashboards 2x6 in size. This headgate is of early construction and the only wooden diversion headgate of its size still in use in the Uinta Basin. The Rocky Point Ditch Company plans on replacing this headgate in the fall of 1983.

The canal starts in the valley of the Duchesne River, and by following contour lines, courses its way in three miles to the southern point of the Blue Bench. On the Blue Bench, the canal splits into the Rocky Point B and C canals. Both these canals drop off the east side of the Blue Bench and irrigate farmland along the Duchesne River, just east of the city of Duchesne.

The Rocky Point Ditch Company was organized at Theodore (Duchesne), Wasatch County, on June 25, 1906. The company perfected its water filing #456 on January 28, 1921. This filing was for 13.8 c.f.s. Another water application, #354, was first made by the Wasatch Development Company and its president, William H. Smart, on June 9, 1906. The Wasatch Development Company assigned this water filing to the Rocky Point Ditch Company on June 25, 1906.

The Rocky Point Canal was surveyed in 1982 by the MESA Corporation. The following information is contained in their report:

"Work began on the canal in the summer of 1906, and the 22 farmers who had filings on the ditch contributed their labor towards its construction. The following spring of 1907, the Rocky Point Ditch Company borrowed \$5,000 from A. M. Murdock and hired some men to help hasten the construction. The Rocky Point Canal was tested in the fall of 1907, and the first irrigation was begun the following spring of 1908. The banks of the canal, however, were not yet firm enough to hold water, and it was another year before it was strong enough to provide irrigation for all the farmers that had initially filed for rights. In 1917, Duchesne contracted to construct a town water system. A storage tank, built on the slopes of Blue Bench to provide the pressure, was fed by the Rocky Point Canal [Dillman, 1948]." [Norman, et. al., p. 40]

REFERENCES

Miscellaneous Book #1, Duchesne County Recorder's Office, Duchesne, Utah, pp. 343, 405, 500.

State Engineer's Office File #43-3096 #3268, Salt Lake City.

State Engineer's Office File #43-155 #957, Salt Lake City.

V. Garth Norman, Cultural Resources Survey of the Duchesne River Area Canal Rehabilitation Program, Orem, MESA Corp., 1982.